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THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020
"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" II COR. 3:17

IndyStar.

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Questions, concerns increase

Travelers: Will we be able to get back home?

Amelia Pak-Harvey
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

From across the world in Thailand, Scott Jones reflected on his time abroad during the coronavirus outbreak.

As the local travel agency owner took tours with people from all over the world last week, he noted that the only glaring concern was ability to travel.

"The biggest concern is, 'Will I be allowed to go to the next place?' " he wrote in an email last week amid a trip to multiple countries. "There is some visible concern, but less about the mortality and more about the ramifications of severe restrictions."

As Indianapolis hotels brace for a slow few weeks following the closure of countless events and a recommended travel restriction from the mayor, the travel industry faces cancellations and rapidly changing plans.

On a global level, the European Commission on Monday proposed a temporary restriction on nonessential travel to the European Union for an initial 30 days. The move followed the World Health Organization's assessment last week that Europe was the epicenter for the virus, reporting more new cases per day than at the height of the virus in China.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 3,487 cases and

See TRAVEL, Page 2A

A traveler passes through Indianapolis International Airport on Saturday. The coronavirus outbreak is hammering the airline industry, which faces "historic" cuts as cancellations soar. PHOTOS BY JENNA WATSON/INDYSTAR

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- Holcomb signs emergency order. **3A**
- Local coronavirus rumors debunked. **5A**
- Online benefit concert has 3 goals. **9A**
- Companies are hiring. **8A**
- Trump wants checks sent to public. **6A**

An employee cleans tables at the airport on Saturday. The impact on visitation at the airport is unclear as monthly data on its website only goes through November.

State nursing homes ID'd with infection control issues

Emily Hopkins and Tim Evans
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Long before the first case of the novel coronavirus was identified in Indiana, state inspectors had identified infection control issues at hundreds of facilities housing the state's most vulnerable residents.

An IndyStar analysis of federal data released in February shows about 73% of Indiana's nursing homes have been cited for failed infection controls in the past three years. And nursing home residents are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of the virus.

It's unclear if any of the residents at Indiana's 534 nursing homes have been exposed. County health officials were able to confirm that some of the 30 positive cases had not had contact with nursing homes. And state officials estimate that there are likely tens of thousand of cases in Indiana that have not yet been confirmed.

In response to federal guidance, nursing homes across the state say they have limited visitation and instituted more stringent hand-washing and infection control measures. Many recommend alternatives to in-person visits, like video conferencing.

Advocates worry the ban on visitation could put the mental health of isolated residents at risk, but nursing homes are left with few options. The virus is spreading nearly undetected

See VIRUS, Page 2A

State rises to meet Irsay's $1M food bank challenge

Gregg Doyel
Columnist
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

You did it, and you did it fast, and this is me being not surprised at all. More than $1.2 million is headed to Gleaners Food Bank – which serves a vital role, and I can't stress those words enough, in feeding Indiana's at-risk children – because of you, and you, and you. Also, because of you and you. And him and her. Businesses around the city. Families.

You. Us.

And Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, of course.

Irsay was the first domino to fall, and he'll be the last, but in between this city and state came together in ways that could be called stunning if you didn't know this city and state. But you know these people. So do I. I've seen them – seen you – do amazing things in the name of sports, and in the name of something much more important.

Jim Irsay called Sunday night, out of the blue, to issue a challenge: If the city of Indianapolis, if the state of Indiana – if you – could generate $200,000 in donations to Gleaners, Irsay would top it off with a check for $1 million.

The story went online here early Monday evening, laying out the premise of his challenge and explaining the need – an everyday need, but one made much more dire by the coronavirus shutting down schools – behind the premise. That was about 5:40 p.m. on Monday.

By mid-Tuesday afternoon, the goal of $200,000 was reached, and then we – and then you – just started showing off. You gave more than $290,000, meaning it was time for Irsay to put up or shut up.

See DOYEL, Page 7A

Choosing between a new walk-in bath or shower for your home depends greatly on your needs and accessibility. While both offer the safety benefit of a low step-in for easy entry, the comfort and aesthetic advantages vary.

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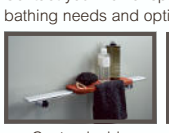
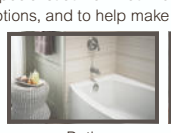
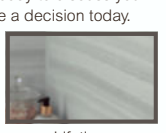

Customizable Accessories


Bath Options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The coronavirus hampered efforts by voters to get to the polls in some states on Tuesday. **6A**

Hoping for an upgrade

The Colts sign former Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers to a one-year, $25 million deal. **1B**

Weather

High 54° | Low 39°
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Forecast, **18A**

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